

Two targets are fixed facing each other at a distance of about 20-25 metres apart. The targets are made of soft wood 45 cm long and 8 cm wide chopped flat. Each player gets to throw a pair of soksom at the target and fetches two points on hitting it while the one which lands nearest to the target is measured by using three fingers (hence, the name soksom or three fingers) which fetches one point. The player should hold the long soksom just below the middle and then it is thrown at the target with the strength required to reach the other end.

The sharp shooter who manages to hit both soksoms at the target secures four points. This is a race to 25 points and the team securing the first 25 points wins the game. Initially, they would bet for coins during the olden days, money or the losers would have to bring enough packed lunch the next day for the winners as well. The sharp end after it hits the target is no longer sharp so a new end is sharpened at the same place. This process goes on until the whole soksom gets shortened by almost half, thereby another bamboo or a thin branch is cut out to make a new one.

#### 2.2.4. Jigdum

*Jigdum* is also a game played mostly by the cow herders in the woods during their free time especially by young boys. The main instrument in this game is a short javelin about 45 cm long pointed at both ends. There is a shorter branch, also pointed, in the middle. The targets are placed at a distance of about 35 metres apart. The target is also made out of soft wood which is about 60 cm long and 4 cm broad with the surface of the target basically smoothed.

A player holds the longer branch of the *jigdum* in his hand and throws it at the target so that it spins like the Australian Boomerang and hit the target with a pointed end.

The points are simply calculated. The players are allowed a pair of *jigdum* each and each hit at the target fetches two points while the nearest one is measured by a span (outstretched middle finger and thumb) which secures one point. The measuring of points differs depending on the players from place to place. The other system of measuring the point is using the length of the *jigdum* itself. It is a race to 25 points and whoever scores it first wins the game. This is played by two or more players and the bets are simply to bring enough lunch for the next day by the losers. Sometimes they would play for wine, but at times the loser is required to go and round up the cattle scattered across the pasture.



#### 2.2.5. Wrestling

The Bhutanese version of wrestling is known as *keshe* (means holding by waist or two opponents wrestling by grabbing each other's belt). Over time, the pronunciation of word has changed from Kay shay to Kishi. This wrestling is held between two adult or young adult men to show their strength over one another while at the same time earning respect in their region. Sometimes the young people would showcase their power of strength over another to impress the women they like.

This is a game played mostly by villagers in the remote areas in Bhutan. In former times wrestling used to be a practice among the members of the service corps in the royal court or among the apprentices in the monastery. In some places wrestling is mainly conducted on the evening of Karmai Nyarub festival.

Two persons grip one another firmly about the waist, each holding onto the other's *kera* (belt) and trying to throw the other to the ground. This game requires strength, agility and balance. Without good balance, one's strength can also be a disadvantage.

In the early days there was no particular occasion or special time to hold this kind of contest. It was a call-on game by one person to the other over different reasons such as provocations or for fun. Today, strong men from all over the country are gathered together for *kyeshe* competition in Thimphu during the celebrations for national day and for the birth anniversary of the reigning monarch.

#### 2.2.6. Dice Game

The dice game (*sho tse*) is an indoor game with its origins in Tibet. It is believed that early traders from Bhutan who went to Tibet for business brought the game back with them. It is played mostly by middle aged men in Bhutan. The game can be played between



two to four persons individually competing against each other but the most preferred number of players is three.

The components required to play this game are 64 small shells and two dice, small cubes with faces bearing one to six dark, usually indented spots. Each player should have a set of nine coins that are distinct from those of the other players. It is a complex game for beginners and spectators as one keeps playing. The game requires quick thinking and rapid execution. During the first round, each player can stack up two coins at a time as the base home. As they play on, one can stack up as many coins as possible at one's home (the start) provided the dice one throws gives out the home number. If one's throw produces a similar number to that of the other players, he can oust the existing coins and replace them with his own. The one who can stack up as many coins as he can and reaches the goal is the winner. It is also an amusing game because before a player rolls out or literally thumps down the dice, he shouts a line of words with the name of the numbers he requires. Sometimes a player says funny things to amuse the others. The actual charm of the game is in the verses calling for the required number to come.

This game is usually played indoors among friends to entertain themselves, but it is also a notorious gambling game and forbidden in public places.

### 2.2.7. Three and One Dice Game

Three and one dice game, or *suk para*, is also a type of a dice game played between two persons or more. There is only one dice with faces bearing one to six dark, usually indented spots. The players bet on only one and three, hence the name *suk para* (*suk* means three, *para* means one). One of the players rolls out the dice. If the dice shows one on the uppermost side, the players who put their stakes on three lose, and vice versa. If the dice shows the numbers of holes other than one and three, it is a tie whereby the dice is rolled out again until one of the two numbers appears.

The numeric terminologies for the dice games are different from the normal linguistic terms and are used only while playing the game.

### 2.2.8. Stone Game

Popularly known as *ek dupa*, the stone game is a very simple game played by teenage girls mostly in the eastern part of Bhutan. It requires only five small round shaped pebbles which can all fit inside the palm. Those days the girls used to play the game with their friends at home or out in the farms while their mothers were at work. Sometimes even young boys took interest in joining the girls to play.

The game is played at five levels, each bearing a distinctive name. In the first level, which is called *ek dupa*, the player holds all five stones in her palm and throws them upwards. She then turns the palm to face the ground, stretching out her fingers to let the pebbles land on the back of her hand. At least one pebble should remain on the back of her hand while falling from above. Then she attempts to pick up those which landed on the ground. She must throw the pebbles on the back of her hand up into the air and collect those on the ground with the same palm which she spreads out to allow those in the air to fall on her palm. This way all the pebbles should be in her palm after the second throw. The game can go on to *ek tripa* and so on.

The next level, *dhue dupa*, requires her to throw the stones on the ground and keep one clasped in between her index finger and the thumb. This time she has to pick up two stones at a time while the one in her hand is thrown in the air.

In the third level, *teen dupa*, the four stones are thrown on the ground. She has to pick up three stones together and after that pick the remaining one.

